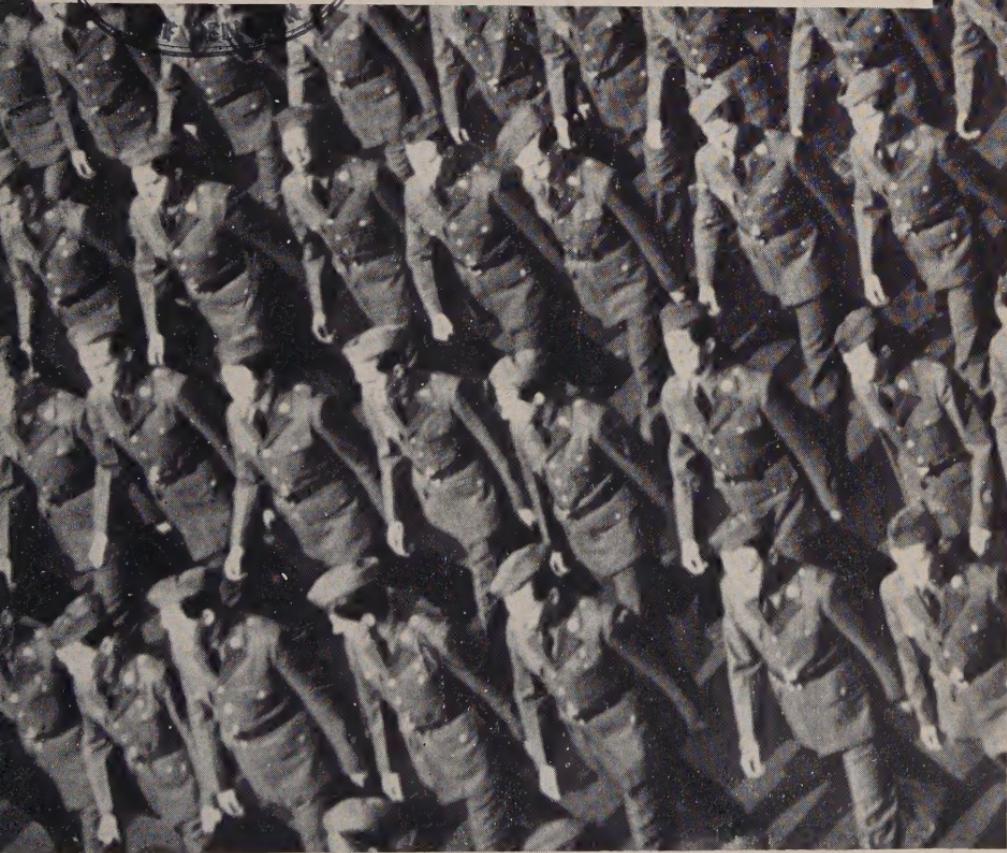


# SOCIAL ACTION

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SEPTEMBER 15, 1945



*the pro and con of*

**Compulsory Military Training**

# SOCIAL ACTION Magazine

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## CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS	3
WHY I FAVOR COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING, <i>by John J. Tigert</i>	4
WHY I OPPOSE COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING, <i>by Walter W. Sikes</i>	13
AN ANALYSIS OF GROUP ALIGNMENTS ON PEACETIME COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING, <i>by Ernest Lefever</i>	24
THE LEGISLATIVE SITUATION, <i>by Tom Keehn</i>	34
A STATEMENT ON PEACETIME TRAINING, <i>by the Council for Social Action</i>	37
SOCIAL SCENE, A Personal Column, <i>by Alfred W. Swan</i>	38
BOOKS FOR SOCIAL ACTION	39
FUTURE ISSUES	<i>back cover</i>

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## Letter from the Editors

For some months now Americans have been trying to reach a personal decision about the wisdom of compulsory military training in peacetime. *Social Action* presents in the following pages two equally sincere statements: one by an outspoken proponent of compulsory military training and an outstanding figure in American education, John J. Tigert; the other by a hard-working opponent of conscription and leader among the peace churches, Walter W. Sikes.

Both of these articles were in galley proof before the advent of the atomic bomb and before the end of the war. Therefore, each writer was asked after these developments for a brief statement on whether his basic position had been altered in any way by them. The statement which each author made appears at the beginning of his article.

Because few proposals in our history have aroused the churches to such united pressure activity, and because the outcome of the present debate over compulsory military training may be a valuable test of the lobbying power of church and educational forces, we have asked Ernest Lefever to present a factual study of group alignments on the issue.

And finally, to make clear the status of the important fight up to press time (August 20), Tom Keehn, legislative secretary of the Council for Social Action, reports on the Washington scene of this debate.

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Two short features have been added to *Social Action* this month: "Social Scene," a personal column by Alfred W. Swan, minister of the First Congregational Church in Madison, Wisconsin, and prophet of a social faith; and a review column which will concentrate on "Books for Social Action."

During the summer *Social Action* has been conducting a reader interest study among its subscribers to find out the type of magazine that will best meet your needs. We will report on the results of this study in a future issue.

# Why I FAVOR Compulsory Military Training

By JOHN J. TIGERT\*

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*The need of a prepared group of men for defense does not disappear with the atomic bomb. The number of men may need modification. We cannot yet say that atomic energy will dispense entirely with infantry and some other arms of the service. It is too early to predict all the effects of the atomic bomb. The general argument for preparedness still stands.*

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I am in favor of a program of universal military training for all able-bodied young men, native-born and alien, because I believe that it is the only means of preserving peace and national security in a manner consistent with our democratic ideals. I propose to review here some of the salient reasons for the position I have taken.

It may be well, at the outset, to define my conception of compulsory military training. Strictly speaking, I am not sure that military training can be regarded as conscription. Conscription has been interpreted as required service in the armed forces. A plan for universal military training which has been proposed by the high commands of the United States Army and Navy would not permit the inductees to be used in war, or even as a domestic police force for quelling riots and preserving order, unless due authority should be granted by the Congress. Young men would indeed be subject to discipline and control by the Army and the Navy but only Congress could send them to war. *Military training, not military service is advocated here.*

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\*John J. Tigert is one of the best-known figures in American education. He was United States Commissioner of Education from 1921 to 1928, and has been president of the University of Florida since the latter date. During the first World War he served with the Y.M.C.A. and in special educational capacities with the A.E.F.

## *The May Bill*

I would not favor a plan calling for one year of continuous training under the Army or Navy beginning at the age of eighteen without any alternative. Such a procedure would appear to be an unjustifiable interruption of a young man's educational, and possibly vocational, opportunities. It would seem to me that the plan (HR-515; S-188) of Congressman Andrew May, chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, offers a sound method of providing military training without *sacrificing* the youth's education. In fact, under this plan, he would probably receive educational and other benefits that otherwise might not be available to him.

The bill provides (Sec. 2) that

"... every male citizen of the United States and every male alien residing therein, shall, upon attaining the age of eighteen years, or within four years thereafter, be subject to military or naval training, and shall be inducted into the Army or Navy of the United States, for this purpose alone, for a period of one year. . . . Provided, that any person subject to training under the provisions of this Act shall have the privilege of electing in such manner and at such time as may be prescribed by regulation, whether such training shall begin when he attains the age of eighteen years or whether it shall be deferred for not more than four years and of expressing whether he desires to train in the Army or the Navy, and so far as practicable, he shall be trained in accordance with such expressed desire."

The bill further provides (Sec. 3) that

"Each young man after the completion of his training under Section 2 shall be enrolled as a reservist in the land or naval forces of the United States for a period of six years, but shall not be subject to compulsory military service during that period except in an emergency declared by the Congress and then only under such conditions as the Congress may prescribe. . . ."

## *Options Under the Plan*

Under the terms of this act, the inductee may not be required to take a year of continuous training beginning at military age.

In fact, he can be inducted after his seventeenth birthday and have a period of four years in which to complete the required training. Further, he has the option of military or naval training. A boy completing his high school work may devote a summer to basic military training and go on to college. If he does, he can be furloughed while he is continuing his education and resume his military training in the summer months. Upon graduation he can immediately enter upon a period of intensive and final training. If he selects an institution which provides military or naval training that is recognized by the Army or Navy, he may even obtain considerably more than one year's training without loss of time or opportunity. If he attends a land-grant college or some other institution with a Reserve Officer Training Unit he can even emerge with a commission, provided the Army or Navy makes proper provision for it, as has been the custom for many years. Should this practice not be continued, he could probably go to an Officer Candidate School and secure a commission in a very short time. However, the principal feature would involve giving the masses of able-bodied young men basic military training.

This plan would provide a citizen army of 6,000,000 at the expiration of a six-year period. It is estimated that there would be available each year 1,250,000 young men, of whom a million would be physically fit. After the six years a reserve army of 6,000,000 would be available at all times to meet any emergency that might arise. So much for the type of training and the conditions under which it would be imposed.

### *For Peace and Democracy*

What are the arguments in support of this proposal? I endorse it because I am a typical American and love peace. I hate war. The preparation of an army for national defense would, in my judgment, prevent or reduce the possibility of wars rather than create or prolong them. Two proposals for national defense are generally suggested: either a large professional army such as Germany, Japan, and other aggressor nations have

maintained, or a considerable reservoir of citizens who can "spring to arms overnight," in the words of the great pacifist, William Jennings Bryan.

It is a tradition of our country that the armed forces shall be under civilian control and influence in order to obviate domination of our country by a military cult. It is pertinent to say that we have fought seven major wars, some of which might have been avoided, and all of which would probably have cost less in blood and money if a reservoir of manpower had been ready for immediate service. It is well known that after the Revolutionary War, George Washington, with the advice of his Secretary of War, Henry Knox, as well as that of Von Steuben and others, recommended a plan which in substance was identical with the present proposal. In a document on National Military Policy, submitted to the Continental Congress, Washington wrote:

"It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system that every citizen who enjoys the protection of a free government, owes not only a portion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it. . . ."

In these words are set forth the cardinal principles and justification of a democratic procedure for adequately guarding against militarism and the provocation of war by professional soldiers. This procedure is likewise our most economical plan of defense. According to estimates, it would cost \$1,000,000,000 a year, but the cost of such a war as the one in which we are now involved would operate it for a great many years.

### *Experience with Voluntary Enlistment*

Unfortunately, Washington's wise counsel has never been followed. In 1792, the passage of the National Militia Act emasculated his plan because no method of securing manpower was incorporated in it. Men could be secured only as volunteers. Our experience in war after war has proclaimed the failure of the voluntary system. Let us pause a moment to note that there were reasons of an elemental character which prevented

the adoption of Washington's plan until our time. In his day, the American people were emerging from a period of domination by England. They had become conscious of individual and political freedom. Each of the colonies coveted sovereignty. The Constitution of the United States would never have been adopted by a single one of the constitutional delegates if they could have contemplated the submergence of local or state independence under a strong, centralized government. Therefore, they were fearful of a national military force. They were not yet apprised of what Washington might do. Historically, military conquerors had become dictators or kings.

It is not necessary to review the struggles which developed over the questions of slavery, nullification, and other issues. All would agree, I think, that it would not have been possible to secure the support of any of the southern states for a national army until after the War Between the States had been fought and the relation of the Union to the States finally determined.

Meanwhile, we paid an exorbitant price in wars and in the

### WHAT THEY SAY FOR PEACETIME MILITARY TRAINING

General of the Army George C. Marshall: "The acceptance at the present time of a general policy recognizing the necessity for universal military training would in my opinion have a far-reaching effect in obtaining a satisfactory international agreement for the terms of the peace."

General Marshall has also said that from an economic point of view the War Department must have a basic policy to guide it in disposing of or maintaining the present vast physical establishment of the Army. "If," he said, "we are to have an effective and economical transition from our present war establishment to our peace establishment, we must now decide on the fundamental basis on which we are to proceed."

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson: "If we wish to protect our nation and our democratic way of life, we must have a state of military preparedness which will enable us to take effective military action in the shortest possible time. . . . The youth of the nation must have had the greater part of its military training before mobilization." Without a large standing army "this can only be done through a system of universal military training. . . ." The adoption of such a program "would be the strongest possible assurance to the rest of the world that America will be . . . able and ready to take its part with the *peace-loving* nations in resisting lawless aggression and in assuring peaceful world order."

toll of life and treasure. If Washington's plan had been adopted, it is doubtful that the war of 1812 would have been fought. Certainly our country would not have been so easily devastated and the capital reduced to ruin such as exists in Berlin today. The method of awaiting the advent of war and then improvising an army has proved costly over and over again.

### ***To Deter Aggressors***

The presence of an adequately trained citizen army would serve to create prestige, self-sufficiency, respect, and faith among ourselves and our friends. It would deter those who might be disposed to attack us because of our impotence, or at least make them pause and reflect. The Germans in the period preceding both world war catastrophes regarded us with contempt and were confident that they could consummate their evil designs of conquest before we would be in a position to furnish effective resistance. It is altogether possible that one or both of these tragic episodes in human history might have been avoided. We have survived only because other nations which were themselves threatened had armies or navies that could withstand aggression for a period of two or three years while we were preparing for combat.

### ***Lessons from Two Wars***

In 1918, the first World War had reached an indeterminate situation which was settled only after we had had an opportunity to get ready. It is common knowledge among men who served in that war that thousands of American boys paid the supreme price and unnecessarily laid down their lives in patriotic duty because of a lack of foresight in providing them with the training which they so desperately needed and which would have afforded them a better chance to survive.

As for the present war, I doubt that anyone would be bold enough to assert that we could have conquered the Germans unless the British and the Russians had carried on against tremendous odds and with miraculous courage until we could

come to their relief. It is equally doubtful that we could have achieved victory in 1918, except at a much greater cost, if the French had not won the great and prolonged battle of Verdun, or if the British Navy had not held tightly to the sea lanes and confined to the continent of Europe, by blockade, the most formidable military machine developed up to the period of the last war.

What Verdun was to the first World War, Stalingrad became to the second. Because of Hitler's fanaticism and his failure to follow the advice of his military leaders, the Germans met disaster in a decisive five months struggle. The Battle of Stalingrad, like that of Valmy and other strange battles of history, reversed every expectation of fate. The army defeated at Stalingrad was the protecting shield that covered the real offensive which had already penetrated the Caucasus with its rich oil fields, and which was marching irresistibly into the Near East.

Had it not been defeated in its rear, this army would probably have continued on into India, where the people were unsympathetic, if not actually hostile, to our British allies. And if this Army had joined hands with the victorious Japanese who had overrun Burma, is there anyone now who would care to assert that we could have won this war? Obviously, we could have won it only after a struggle which would have lasted many years and which would have exhausted the wealth and manpower of the United States and its allies. In the event of another war, the aggressors might decide to attack us first. The lack of a trained army and equipment would probably prove fatal.

### *Military Competence of Reserves*

The opponents of a large reserve army of citizens, realized through compulsory training, offer the objection that reserves do not make good soldiers and that their training is obsolete when needed. Experience has proved the stamina and value of

reserves. Professional soldiers have been insignificant in the armies of the United States. Our wars have not been won by them. Rather, reserves and citizen soldiers have made our victories possible. Consider, for example, the officer personnel in the present conflict. We had only about 14,000 regular Army officers at the outset. Three months after Pearl Harbor, 75 per cent of our Army officers were members of the Reserve Corps. Incidentally, 38 per cent of these were trained in the R.O.T.C. units of colleges. How much longer would it have required to train the great army which was needed, and which we now have, without these reserve officers? After a season of experience in battle, they demonstrated their equality with professional soldiers in both world wars. Without their leadership, the training of an army would have required much more time, and our casualties, which have already mounted to more than a million, would have risen to unpredictable figures.

It is true that the evolution of warfare causes training methods to become rapidly outmoded and equipment obsolete. The first World War was a war of location, trenches, and almost impenetrable defenses. In the present war, the tactics of movement which have been developed have risen to the tempo of a blitzkrieg, amid employment of swifter and more powerful weapons of destruction.

The opponents of compulsory military training cite France as a victim of both a training system and obsolete methods. It is true that the military processes of France developed very little after 1918, but to attribute her downfall to this is to oversimplify the French situation. France was paralyzed by internal dissension, political bickering, and military incompetency, aggravated by powerful collaboration with the enemy.

### *Keeping Up with Technological Change*

In my opinion, the argument that we should not prepare for war because techniques change and become obsolete is fatuous. If such a contention were true, we would desist from everything

we are now doing. Training and equipment may become outmoded, but that is a reason why we should keep in training, year after year, large groups of men who would constantly be taught to use effectively the latest and newest technical devices and equipment.

The program which is here advocated contemplates not only broad basic training but specialized training which will encourage the continuance of research and improvement of planes, tanks, and all other implements of war that have been or may be devised. These techniques may become obsolete, but we shall continually develop new ones and have a reservoir of men who will know how to employ them. We shall no longer be solely occupied, after the fashion of the past, with the pursuits of peace and industry, burying our heads in the sand until the storms of war break upon us.

### *Other Advantages of Training*

I have no space to dwell upon the advantages that will accrue to the individual by way of physical, technical, and vocational assistance. It seems obvious, however, that the proposed program should tend to eliminate much of the physical unfitness among the young men of the nation. It would mean, moreover, that they would have at least an annual "checkup" and remedial measures at their disposal.

I do not advocate having the Army and Navy provide educational offerings of any kind. Their programs of training should be confined only to that knowledge, technical or otherwise, which is essential to war and national defense. Other types of educational training would be dangerous and might be the means of militaristic indoctrination.

Universal military training provides the maximum national security and insurance against war at the minimum cost without danger to the traditional American way of life.

# Why I OPPOSE Compulsory Military Training

By WALTER W. SIKES\*

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*The atomic bomb carries two tremendous implications that confirm my opposition to universal peacetime military training: (1) It renders mass armies anachronous, since any future war will be fought neither with nor against such armies but with technological devices against nerve centers of industry and populations. (2) It reveals clearly the necessity for truly international and democratic controls over all munitions and military establishments, which can be achieved by radical amendment of the United Nations Organization. In view of these revolutionary facts, to subject the total citizenry to close order drill and military discipline would reveal the impotence of our political wisdom, since such could serve only to render the people docile and responsive to authoritarian command. When this is done democracy is dead and freedom is a fiction.*

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The opponents of peacetime military conscription find themselves at this moment in the position of objecting to a somewhat undefined policy. Although there are identical bills in the House (HR 515) and Senate (S 188) and somewhat similar bills expired with the previous Congress, it is quite probable that the exact bill to be pressed for adoption by the advocates is yet to be framed. That it will be presented is rendered practically certain by the recent favorable recommendations of the House Committee on Postwar Military Policy following a series of hearings in June. But the major features of this proposed

\*Walter Sikes has taught philosophy and religion in Berea College for several years. At present he is on leave with the American Friends Service Committee, with particular responsibility for the formation of public opinion on peacetime military training. He has been active also in the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

legislation are clear enough. It contemplates induction of all young men at eighteen years of age, or within four years thereafter at the discretion of the individual, into a military or naval establishment for purposes of training for a year, after which they would be enlisted in the reserve components for five or six years. In the present bills (HR 515 and S 188) there are no provisions for alternative service for religious conscientious objectors. If one can judge from the bill now before Congress, the law would be as brief as possible, leaving details to executive interpretation and order.

### *Three Reasons Urged for Delay*

The main opposition to this proposal has been explicitly voiced against its adoption now, with a minority objecting to the compulsory military training of American youth in peacetime whenever legislated. Three reasons are urged for delay. First, it is objected that such a revolutionary reversal in the deliberate policy of the United States should not be made without more thorough consideration than is possible while the total energies of the people are being demanded by a world war. Some eight million citizens under arms, many of them in foreign lands, would find participation in democratic process on any issue practically impossible.\* And on this particular matter political activity is inhibited not only by the exigencies of the situation but by executive order also. "Except as authorized by the War Department," present Army Regulations provide, "efforts by any person in the active service of the United States . . . to procure or oppose or in any manner influence legislation affecting the Army . . . are forbidden."

This regulation is not being strictly enforced. Soldiers do express themselves in print and otherwise on the issue; and they have addressed their congressional representatives, ap-

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\*The end of the war, which has come since this was written, will not soon alter this fact, since it will be one to two years, according to present estimates before the majority of service men and women will be released. And 50,000 new recruits are to be added monthly.

parently without permission of the War Department. When Representative Woodrum, chairman of the House Committee on Postwar Military Policy, during the recent hearings read into the record a letter from a soldier in Europe advocating peacetime conscription, a member of the Committee raised the question whether this was a violation of military regulations. As a matter of fact, the War Department has not only freely granted permission for servicemen to agitate for this proposal, it has officially championed it itself, and has been charged with allocating important personnel to the job of promoting it politically. Although an order was published last January requiring army personnel not to engage in political activity on the issue, the Michigan Labor Committee against Peacetime Conscription some months later protested that General Weible and his entire staff together with one officer in each corps area office had been assigned to this special job. On the other hand, military or naval personnel who have expressed themselves in opposition to the official position of the War Department generally have done so anonymously. And in a few known instances requests of officers for permission to speak or write in opposition to the proposal have been ignored or denied. That the military power and prestige of the Army are being used prejudicially in the matter is not open to question.

Such impediments to free democratic process might not be decisive for postponement were there urgent reasons why action cannot wait. But such is not the case. For, in the second place, whatever the exigencies of the immediate future may be, and apart from the merits or demerits of peacetime military training itself, there are no convincing reasons for precipitate decision of the matter. All present military needs are being served by the Selective Service Act, which will continue to operate for six months beyond the legal end of the war. Moreover, according to Section 3(c) of the Act, every person who has been inducted under its provisions will remain in the reserve components of the army or navy for ten years after his dis-

charge or until he attains forty-five years of age. This will give us a trained reserve of five to eight millions for more than a decade.

The final consideration urged against passage of the proposal during the present emergency is that rather than serving immediate needs such action on the part of the United States now would actually be a disservice to the establishment and maintenance of peace. For America suddenly to reverse her historic policy on the matter of mass armies in peacetime just at the moment when the United Nations are engaged in working out multilateral agreements for world order and security, would be, or at least would appear to others to be, an act of bad faith. It would not only be a declaration by implication of our intention to proceed unilaterally and hence in a spirit of distrust of any world security organization; it might also easily be taken as a veiled threat against one or more of our present allies—since our enemies are being annihilated. In either or both cases, it would be a blow at the mutual confidence required for any world order.

This position received considerable verification during the recent congressional hearings by the Woodrum Committee, when an important witness, W. R. Mathews, Arizona publisher and editor, urged immediate enactment of permanent conscription in preparation for diplomatic and, if necessary, military opposition to what he termed Russia's aggression in Europe and Asia. Enough such testimony was presented during the first two days of the hearings to lead Representative Allen of Illinois to remark that it was obvious to him, and deplorable, that the policy being advocated was aimed at one and only one nation, an ally, Russia.

The State Department, on the eve of the San Francisco conference, requested Congress not to take action on legislation for compulsory military training in peacetime while the United Nations were in consultation. Whether the Woodrum Committee violated the intention of this request by conducting its

hearing while the San Francisco meetings were in process is perhaps debatable. But it is obvious that the hearings did nothing to enhance the good will of other major powers. One might ask whether, if it was hazardous—as the request of the State Department indicated—to act on universal military training during the period when the charter for international co-operation was being framed, it would not be equally so during the early years of its tenuous authority in practice?

### *Reasons for Immediate Adoption Inconclusive*

What are the reasons offered for immediate adoption of the proposal? There are three openly stated. The first, urged by General Marshall, is that long time planning is prerequisite for economy and efficiency in administering the enormous establishments of our present and anticipated armies and navies. Executives need to know now whether these installations are to be needed for peacetime training, or how far they are to be needed. This desire to remove the contingencies of a job is natural enough, but to use it as an argument for peacetime conscription is to beg the real question.

A second argument is the insistence, voiced by Representative May last November, that unless the law is passed now it will never be secured. If this be true, it is all the more reason for delay, since it implies either the unsoundness of a policy that will not stand examination, or the need to adopt it under the motivation of a temporary war philosophy. Also since the Constitution requires that Congress review and provide for military needs biennially, to force now a law which would not commend itself continuously to the public mind would be abortive.

The third reason urged for immediate enactment is that recited in the report of the Woodrum Committee to Congress, that such a law is needed to enable us to fulfill our international commitments. But in fact we have only two such commitments involving military forces—those needed to occupy conquered

territory, and those to be required under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, unless there are secret commitments beyond these. But the proposed law would supply no forces of any kind, either for our own armies at home or abroad or for an international contingent.

Some of these objections would not be relevant to a bill designed to conscript men for active service. But such a measure is not proposed, and it would raise objections of its own of an even more formidable nature. These are the reasons advanced in support of postponement of a decision, as distinguished from those reasons which are urged against the measure as such. And they are given by the spokesmen of organized religion, education, labor, agriculture in their almost unanimous opposition to immediate action.

### *Who Supports Compulsory Military Training?*

It is significant that while the advocates of the measure come generally from the military, ex-military, and federal administrative groups, the opposition comprises those institutions in America especially devoted to the promotion and security of our cultural heritage—the values of education, of religion, of personal integrity, individual character and social morality. Three-fifths of the intellectual leaders of the nation, according to the findings of the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University, believed in April that military training would in itself be bad for American youth. This division of the public mind suggests the basic issues involved. The real issue is the intrinsic conflict between the values to which America has been traditionally devoted and what is regarded as political and military necessity.

Those groups directly and professionally concerned with political and social order, particularly those who equate public order with the maintenance of the status quo and regard military power as the ultimate sanction of any order, quite naturally desire to convert the total manpower into the maximum

military strength to be tolerated by the American mind. For equally obvious reasons those most directly concerned with the moral and spiritual values of our national life, and who intuitively as well as deliberately share the historic American view that military power however necessary is always a potential threat to civic virtues, look with much apprehension upon the proposed entrenchment of that power. Since the issue is basically one of the conflict between military necessity and public and private morality, we should examine the proposal in the light of the present political situation, and then in relation to its probable effects upon the national character.

That public order is required for the realization of the desired public and private virtues is not debatable. Anarchy is a poor school. And one of the first questions is what kind of a contribution peacetime conscription would make to the maintenance of a just and peaceful world order. One aspect of this question is how it would affect our foreign policy—since presumably we do not need a mass army to maintain order at home. Whether we need universal conscription to maintain

### WHAT THEY SAY AGAINST PEACETIME MILITARY TRAINING

*National Education Association:* "There are those who argue for military training on the basis of its value to youth. As an association devoted to education, we believe that better training for competent citizenship and satisfying personal living can be offered by civilian than by military agencies.

"Thus, it is our conviction that the enactment of legislation for compulsory military training at the present time for the post-war years would be a disastrous blow at the prospects for a just and enduring peace and is in no way justified as a means to better educating the citizens of our democracy."

*B. H. Liddell Hart*, who has spent a quarter of a century in the study of war: "The conscriptive method is out of date—a method that clung like ivy to a quantitative standard in an age when the trend of warfare was becoming increasingly qualitative. For it sustained the fetish of mere numbers at a time when skill and enthusiasm were becoming even more necessary for the effective handling of the new weapons.

"Conscription does not fit the conditions of modern warfare—its specialized technical equipment, mobile operations, and fluid situations. Success increasingly depends on individual initiative which in turn springs from a sense of personal responsibility—these senses are atrophied by compulsion."

our foreign policy will be determined largely by what that policy is to be. If it is to be that indicated by such proponents of peacetime conscription as the *New York Daily News*, which sees America as holding most of the wealth and privilege of the world, and deservedly, so that she should take care only to maintain this inequitable situation by whatever power she can command, then we shall need the greatest possible military strength. But if we are to take seriously the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, we will realize that security and peace are to be achieved not by threat of nationalistic power but by the removal of economic, political, psychological, and their consequent military, pressures. In this case we shall not seek to prevent war by over-confident military power.

### ***Peacetime Training Will Not Prevent War***

The extravagant assertions that a policy of universal military training in the past would have avoided most, if not all, of our wars, ignores the other and more dynamic causes of war than weapons and men. No nation can make itself so formidable as to awe into submission all its potential foes. To attempt such an impossibility, as many voices plead that we do, would bankrupt us economically, rob us of our civil and personal liberties, and in the end plunge us into war. For the increase of military preparations by one nation prompts others to consolidate their own strength by increased armaments and alliances. The National Opinion Research Center in December 1944 found 71 per cent of the people believing that our adoption of this program would increase the probability that other nations would follow suit. Then we, of course, would respond in kind.

That fatal upward spiral would certainly make no contribution to the peace of the world. This is why Hanson W. Baldwin, eminent military analyst, can say, "Conscription has never stopped war and never made war less frequent." On the contrary, it would probably increase greatly the hazard of war not

only by stimulating fears abroad and provoking counter preparations by other nations, but especially by feeding an equally dangerous attitude at home; namely, the delusion of Americans, traditionally isolationist and overconfident, that having guaranteed our security by military might, we would have no necessity to seek security by compromise of national sovereignty and by international cooperation. Dean William Hastie of Howard University's Law School called this the "ever-present danger that the nation with tremendous peacetime military strength will become antagonistic rather than persuasive."

### *How Peace is to be Achieved*

Peace is to be achieved in the next decades, if at all, first, by the mutual trust and goodwill of nations, as has been so often repeated in recent months; and second, by the willingness and ability of these to achieve a greater measure of justice within nations, especially the disadvantaged ones; and finally, by their success in resolving through orderly international action any minor threats to the general welfare. Peacetime conscription here would have mostly a negative value.

In the event peace does break down, there might be some military advantage in having given most of our men a year of training. But it would be slight, and would consist chiefly in shortening the necessary training on the eve of the war. We would still have to legislate, select for service, industry, agriculture, etc., and re-train before trainees could become an army. Hanson Baldwin declares that we need no mass army at the start of a war, unless we intend a war of aggression, even though we need one to finish it. And he fears that a mass of reserves such as peacetime conscription would furnish would deceive even the military into thinking it represents formidable strength. Besides it might do in America what it has apparently had a tendency to do elsewhere, "stultify all military progress in this country."

If the political consequences of conscription promise to be

so negative and the military advantages slight, or even neutral, what values may we expect? Some have urged the contributions to health, education, economic employment and other non-military values. But these are at the most regarded as incidental, and pretty generally discredited as reasons for regimenting our entire male population. Secretary Stimson, before the Woodrum Committee, called these "minor advantages" which could be otherwise obtained. He insisted, in line with most of the advocates, that the program adopted be devoted specifically and solely to the development of military power. But when one examines the concepts of military power, discipline, patriotism, and "democracy" alleged as reasons why we must have universal military training, the matter begins to appear in its true light.

### ***"Matters of the Spirit"***

In his public statement Mr. Stimson affirmed that there is something other than physical training and technical competency which is to be sought by the program intended. He called it "matters of the spirit," and declared it could not be imparted properly in any other way than through "patriotic training and discipline" by the military. This is what is called "discipline"—which it is alleged by the proponents that all American youths need. That youth should be disciplined few will deny. But whether to inculcate in every citizen "the habit of automatic obedience" by shrewd exploitation of the herd instinct through close-order drill, pomp and pageantry, that deliberately substitutes indoctrination for reason (which is the description of military training and its objectives given in the *Infantry Journal* [December 1928] by Captain John H. Burns), is the kind of discipline they need is another question. Such discipline is essential to the military structure and function. But it is equally hostile to democratic freedom.

In a letter to the Woodrum Committee, General Eisenhower, requesting universal military training, referred to this indispensable factor as "integration" which stems from "one de-

cisive voice at the top" and issues in a "unification in thought, purpose, and training." Of all spokesmen for universal training this popular war leader's testimony is the most unambiguous and unpretentious. He states so simply and so clearly what he wants from the proposed program that no one can mistake his meaning. It is essentially inconsistent with what has historically been accepted as the American democratic tradition, and closely akin to the very militarism against which we fought. He defines training as of three types: the first, "physical hardening" which requires least time and must be done over again on the eve of war; the second, "technical training" which takes more time and should be done before the war starts. But it is the third which is basic; it is "psychological indoctrination and moral training" and is the essence of the program. This is intended to impart to "the national mass, civilians and the uniformed services . . . a common understanding . . . of the basic justice of the fight the country is waging." Now it is one thing to have an army with a "theirs-not-to-reason-why" discipline. It is quite another to have a whole "national mass, civilian and uniformed services" which has been so "indoctrinated" and "integrated" to one-single purpose decided by "one decisive vote at the top" that it knows beforehand that whatever this voice commands is "basic justice." This has been called in recent Germany the *Fueherprinzip*—the leadership principle. It is not very American.

This is the militarism feared and repudiated by this republic for a century and a half, whether inculcated by a professional military caste or channeled to the whole citizenry by means of a so-called "citizens army." And this is why Dr. A. J. Brumbaugh, speaking for the most inclusive educational group in America, the American Council on Education, representing 110 national and regional educational associations and 719 universities, colleges, private schools, school systems, and educational departments of industry, said the first reason educators oppose the current proposal is "fear of what universal military training will do in regimenting the mind of youth."

*An analysis of*

## Group Alignments on Peacetime Compulsory Military Training

By ERNEST LEFEVER\*

A thorough study of the organizations working for and against the enactment of universal military training in peacetime will plunge one headlong into the arena of conflicting pressure groups in peacetime Washington. Since the introduction of the Wadsworth bill (H.R. 1806) and the first May bill (H.R. 3947) in Congress early in 1944, peacetime compulsory military training has been a hotly contested issue. National educational, religious, labor, farm, veterans, and civic groups have spoken on it. Their state and local organizations have debated it and passed resolutions. Citizens all the way from the late President Roosevelt and top War Department officials to the editor of the *Smalltown Weekly News* have had their say. Few proposals in our history have aroused as many groups to action as the issue of peacetime conscription; few have received as much attention from the press.

The problem of universal training cannot be fully understood apart from the alignment of its proponents and its opponents. Actually most groups, until the war's sudden end, took their position, not on a for-or-against basis, but in terms of immediate action or postponement. They asked: *Shall we adopt peacetime conscription now or shall we wait until after the war to decide the question?* All groups pressing for adoption immediately were obviously in favor of the measure. Few if any ardent proponents favored delay. Those groups seeking postponement were almost without exception against compul-

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sory military training. After giving a series of arguments against the adoption of the measure at any time, the official statements of these latter groups usually closed by urging that at least such legislation should not be enacted now. This emphasis upon delay rather than outright opposition was a matter of strategy. The opponents believed that if conscription was not enacted during the war it would not be adopted later. Fully aware of this probability the advocates urged immediate passage of appropriate legislation "while the lessons of the present war are fresh in our minds." With the termination of the war, most leaders of the opposition recognize that "postponement" is no longer a feasible or adequate stand, and that the issue must be decided in the near future.

### **Congress and Peacetime Training**

Although the first bills calling for compulsory military training of American youth were introduced early in 1944, the proposal gained little attention from the general public until some six months later. During this period the proponents were busy laying valuable groundwork for what they knew would be a tough struggle. Among the opposition the National Educational Association and the peace groups were the first to marshall their forces. Soon other educational groups and churches became concerned and passed resolutions.

When the announcement was made that the House Military Affairs Committee would conduct hearings on universal training in November, 1944, an unprecedented flood of letters opposing the measure poured into Washington. On November 14, the Associated Press commented:

A mountain of opposition has piled up against plans of congressional leaders to seek early action on legislation requiring military training in peacetime. It has become so formidable that backers of the proposal say they would just as soon postpone consideration until some time next year. . . . *Major opposition to the legislation has come from churchmen, educators, and other groups who have*

*flooded the committees with petitions and letters. Committee spokesmen said indorsements have been received from the American Legion and other veterans' organizations."* (italics ours)

Overwhelmed by the strength of the opposition the proponents reset their stakes and prepared for a long, bitter struggle. Rather than risking defeat, the advocates decided that the matter should not receive the consideration of the Seventy-eighth Congress.

Undaunted by the opposition, Representative May introduced on January 3, 1945, a new bill calling for peacetime military training. Chairman Woodrum announced that the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy would hold hearings on the problem shortly after the inauguration of President Roosevelt on January 20. Due to continued opposition and to prolonged discussion on the work-or-fight bills, the hearings were again postponed. Then came the death of the President and the San Francisco Conference. At long last the Woodrum Committee conducted hearings from June 4 to 19. Since this Committee is only a policy-recommending body with no power to legislate, specific proposals for peacetime training will have to be referred to the House Military Affairs Committee under the chairmanship of Representative May.

### *The Constellation of Pressure Groups*

The alignment of groups for and against peacetime compulsory training has become clear cut. The measure is vigorously advocated by top officials in the War Department, by heads of the veterans organizations, and by the Citizens Committee for Military Training of Young Men, Inc. The War Department, working closely with the American Legion chiefs, with the Citizens Committee, and with certain congressmen, is the most powerful pressure group behind the drive for post-

war training. Influential citizens, educators, editors, and officers have spoken for the measure.

Arrayed against compulsory military training is a formidable host including *all major* educational, religious, labor, farm, and peace groups in the United States, in addition to a number of influential civic organizations. Supplementary to passing resolutions and distributing literature, most of these established groups have encouraged their members to discuss the issue and to express their views in Washington.

The most complete single source for studying the alignment of these opposing groups is the 614-page record of the Hearings Before the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy (hereafter referred to as the *Hearings*) on universal military training. These hearings were conducted June 4-19, 1945. Also useful is Part II of the record which contains 118 statements filed with the Woodrum Committee before or during the hearings. (Part II will be referred to as the *Statements*.) Without the aid of corrective sources, however, the *Hearings* and the *Statements* alone would present a somewhat distorted picture of the organizational alignment.

### *The Classification of Groups*

Before discussing the position of particular national groups, a brief summary of the over-all configuration will lend perspective. For clarity we will divide the groups into three categories: A) *Established Organizations*, including churches, educational associations, civic groups, and the like; B) *Military and Veterans Groups*; and C) *Special Temporary Organizations*. The following table includes all national groups known to the writer which have taken a position for or against peacetime compulsory military training. It includes every national group which testified before or filed statements with the Woodrum Committee in addition to many who were not so represented. This table does not cover individuals or regional, state, and local groups.

## POSITION OF NATIONAL GROUPS UP TO AUGUST 20, 1945

	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
<b>A. ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS:</b>		
1. Educational Associations .....	0	26
2. Religious Bodies .....	1	24
3. Labor Groups .....	0	9
4. Farm Organizations .....	0	4
5. Civic Groups .....	1	11
6. Political Parties .....	0	4
7. Peace Groups .....	0	7
8. Patriotic Societies .....	1	0
	3	85
<b>B. MILITARY AND VETERANS GROUPS:</b>		
1. Veterans Groups .....	6	1
2. Military and Defense Societies .....	4	0
3. War Department (including its several branches) .....	1	0
	11	1
<b>C. SPECIAL TEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONS:</b>		
1. Committees for Military Training .....	2	0
2. Committees Against Military Training .....	0	3
	2	3
<b>SUMMARY</b>		
Group A .....	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Group A .....	3	85
Group B .....	11	1
Group C .....	2	3
	16	89
		<i>Total</i>
		105

Merely counting noses in an issue as complex as this does not give a complete picture. Top War Department officials, for example, may wield more power over Congress than all the other groups combined. Nevertheless, it is significant that only three out of eighty-eight influential, "established," national groups advocate compulsory military training in peacetime. It is even more significant when we consider who these dissenting

groups are—the American Council of Christian Churches, a recent association of small fundamentalist bodies out to vilify the Federal Council; the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; and the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Catholic War Veterans is the only national military group opposed to postwar training. Though the various military and veterans groups favor universal training, they do not agree on a single plan.

Now we will focus our attention on specific groups, noting their position and glancing briefly at the methods they employ to realize their objectives.

### *Organized Religion in Opposition*

Never before in America have the forces of organized religion—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—been as united on a single national issue as they are on postwar training. Twenty-four national religious bodies oppose the measure. In most cases the decisions are those of national conventions, but in several instances representative councils spoke for their constituents. The position taken by these national bodies has been endorsed by that of numerous regional, state, and municipal groups. Of all the state and city councils of churches whose position is known, not one favors compulsory training. The tens of thousands of letters which flooded Washington from church people lend weight to the affirmation by officials that their statements do represent the prevailing attitude among church members.\* However, one of the perplexing problems of pressure politics is the difficulty of determining just how rep-

\*Some of the religious groups which testified before or filed statements with the Woodrum Committee are as follows: Federal Council of Churches, United Council of Church Women, National Catholic Welfare Conference (representing the Bishops and Archbishops of the Roman Catholic Church), Rabbinical Assembly of America, Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, Church of the Brethren, Congregational Christian Churches (Council for Social Action), Disciples of Christ, Evangelical and Reformed Church, Mennonite Churches, Methodist Church, Northern Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Society of Friends, Southern Baptist Convention, United Lutheran Church in America, and eight other national groups.

representative resolutions by officials of organizations are of rank and file members.

The fundamentalist American Council of Churches is the only religious group supporting peacetime military training. Testifying in behalf of this Council, Carl McIntire, pastor of a Bible Presbyterian Church, spoke against atheistic communism, radical labor leaders, the ideal of world peace, the regimentation of the "totalist states," and the Federal Council which for twenty years has been a "fountainhead of pacifism." He declared that peacetime conscription is "both American and Biblical."\*

National educational associations, labor groups and farm organizations form a solid block against the enactment of post-war conscription. No group in the 39 whose position is known favors the proposal.† As in the case of organized religion, the regional, state, and local groups support the position of their national organizations.

### *Civic and Peace Groups in Opposition*

A list of national civic, political and peace groups opposing postwar training will further clarify the organizational alignment.

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\**Hearings*, pp. 472-475.

†A list of some of the educational, labor and farm groups follows. All but six of the groups listed testified at the Woodrum Committee.

**EDUCATIONAL GROUPS:** National Education Association, Association of American Colleges, American Council on Education, American Association of University Professors, National Association of Secondary School Principals, American Association of Teachers Colleges, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, American Education Fellowship, National Commission on Christian Higher Education, National Council for the Social Studies, Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities, American Association of School Administrators, Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions, American Association of Junior Colleges, and twelve other national groups.

**LABOR GROUPS:** The Congress of Industrial Organizations, the American Federation of Labor, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, American Federation of Teachers, Workers Defense League, and three other national groups.

**FARM GROUPS:** National Farmers Union, the National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

**CIVIC GROUPS:**

National Board of the Y.W.C.A., Union for Democratic Action, American Civil Liberties Union, The People's Lobby, Post War World Council, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, March on Washington Movement, Committee on Work With High School Youth, Y.M.C.A., Women's Christian Temperance Union, and Annual Governors Conference, 1944.

**POLITICAL PARTIES:**

Socialist Party, Socialist Labor Party, Communist Party and Prohibition Party.

American Friends Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Mennonite Central Committee, War Resisters League, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, National Council for the Prevention of War, and National Peace Conference (sixteen groups).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the only national civic group favoring peacetime training. We can add the D.A.R. if it can be considered a *civic* group. Neither the Republican nor Democratic Party has taken an explicit stand on the issue. The Socialists have been actively opposed. Since the recent change in the line,\* the Communist Party (formerly the Communist Political Association) seems to have shifted from support of conscription to opposition.†

***The Opponents Cooperate***

The most active groups in the fight against peacetime compulsory military training are the N.E.A. and other educational associations, the United Auto Workers (C.I.O.), the A.F. of L., the National Farmers Union, the Methodist Church, the Post War World Council, and the peace groups. Before the Woodrum Hearing, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was very active. Although less vocal now it still maintains its position.

An attempt has been made and with some success to coordinate the work of most opposition forces through two temporary organizations. The National Council Against Peace-

\*See article in *Time*, August 6, 1945, p. 26.

†See editorial in *Daily Worker*, July 7, 1945, p. 2.

time Conscription Now, under the chairmanship of Dr. Alonzo F. Myers of New York University, has done an effective educational job. Rev. John M. Swomley, Jr., and E. Raymond Wilson, who have been editing *Conscription News* since November, 1944, work with a small staff representing the A.F.S.C., the F.O.R., and other peace groups. They cooperate very closely with church, educational and labor groups. Through *Conscription News* and field workers many state and local committees have been formed.

### ***What the War Department Wants***

The central drive for universal military training in peacetime comes from a relatively small but powerful group made up of high-ranking War Department officials, national officers of the American Legion, certain big industrialists and investment bankers, and a number of U.S. Congressmen. Close personal collaboration among these men is indicated in literature published by the Legion and the Citizens Committee, by speeches of War Department secretaries, and by the testimony at the Woodrum Hearings.

Lt. Col. Roscoe S. Conkling, recently retired from active service, claims in a pamphlet called *The Case Against Compulsory Military Training* that the push for permanent conscription comes from top Army and Navy officers who look upon it as an opportunity to retain their preferred positions, their high salaries, and the concomitant social prestige and political influence. Regardless of motives—which no writer can clearly know—it is true that in the past eighteen months the Secretaries of the War and Navy, their assistants, and other members of the General Staff have served as public spokesmen for training. Further, they have been working closely with the Legion, the Citizens Committee, and certain Congressmen in drafting appropriate legislation and in moulding public opinion to back such legislation. Mr. Conkling and others have charged that this conduct is a violation of Army Regulations which forbid persons in active service from attempting to in-

fluence peacetime legislation. While high officers were requested to speak *for* the measure, Lt. Col. Conkling was not granted permission to express his views *against* conscription.

### ***The Citizens Committee and the American Legion***

An investigation of the Citizens Committee for Universal Military Training, Inc., indicates a tie between Wall Street and the War Department. Although 9 Pine Street is given as the address, the Committee is actually located at 14 Wall Street or in the office of its co-chairman, Archibald Thacher of the firm, Barry, Wainwright, Thacher, and Symmers. Mr. Thacher also holds top positions in the Seamen's Bank for Savings, the American and Foreign Insurance Co., the Imperial Assurance Co., the Phoenix Indemnity Co., etc. The writer has studied the connections of the other active members of the Citizens Committee which, while not as numerous, are not unlike those of Mr. Thacher. Steel, aircraft, and other heavy industries are well represented. Prof. C. H. Hamlin says that the Citizens Committee is the public relations front of the War Department. Certainly, the sincere proponent of compulsory military training must be embarrassed by the fact that he advances the interests of wealthy industrialists and financiers who would presumably profit by a permanent arms economy and by an imperialism undergirded by compulsory military training, just as sincere opponents of compulsory peacetime training must be embarrassed by the friendly relationships of some of their political leaders with the Senator Taft-isolationist-crowd.

The alignment of groups in favor of and in opposition to compulsory military training cannot indicate to us the position which we as independent citizens should take. However, something about the nature of a bill can be learned by a study of its friends and its enemies. Also with an understanding of the alignment of groups on this issue we can learn much from the results about the relative effectiveness of various types of pressure groups in America.

# The Legislative Situation

By TOM KEEHN

With the Japanese surrender, determination by Congress of national policy on peacetime military training becomes an immediate issue. The decision will probably be reached before the end of the six months period following cessation of hostilities, during which time the present Selective Service System continues to operate.

At present, only one bill has been introduced in Congress which calls for a program of peacetime military training. This is the May bill (H.R. 515) in the House and the Gurney bill (S. 188) in the Senate. These identical bills are currently on the dockets of the House Military Affairs Committee (Rep. Andrew J. May, *Ch.*) and the Senate Military Affairs Committee (Sen. Elbert Thomas, *Ch.*). No action is scheduled upon the bill by either committee. It is likely, however, that the House Committee will act first and in support of the bill. Major provisions of the May-Gurney bill have already been outlined in this issue of *Social Action*.

## ***Other Legislation***

Two resolutions (HJR 220 and 221) call for a national referendum in the next Congressional election on the question of peacetime military training. Governors are asked to submit to the voters the following question: "Do you favor the passage of a law by the Congress of the United States to compel one year of military training for young men in time of peace?"

The Martin Resolution (H. Res. 325) and the Ludlow Resolution (H. Res. 331) ask "that before the United States adopts compulsory military service, the President of the U.S., the Secretary of State, and the personal representative of the President of the U.S. on the United Nations Organization, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., be, and hereby are, urged to work unceasingly for an immediate international agreement whereby com-

pulsory military service shall be wholly eliminated from the policies and practices of all nations."

The Ludlow resolution goes on to recommend that each nation agree to refer every decision for the use of force by the Security Council of the United Nations Organization to a referendum of the people in the respective nations.

Representative Martin prefaces his resolution with a statement showing the unprecedented nature of peacetime military training in America and the need of only a small force by the Security Council.

### *The Woodrum Committee Report*

The Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, generally known as the Woodrum Committee, held hearings on the question of peacetime military training, and on July 5 made its report to the House. It recommended peacetime military training as a national policy for America. United States, the report said, must assume responsibility in the new United Nations Organization commensurate with its military power. An indispensable component of this power is a trained citizenry. A large standing army violates American traditions, is prohibitive in cost and would be inadequate for modern technical warfare. Military training is essential, along with other phases of military planning, to supplement a small standing army. The report concludes by stressing that training—not service—is envisioned, that it must be democratic and universal, that it should conform to requirements of modern warfare and that it should be designed to cause the least possible interference with normal education and careers.

### *Next Session of Congress*

Four major legislative possibilities concerning peacetime military training may be watched for in the next session of Congress. First, the existing Selective Service System may be continued beyond the end of hostilities and six months. Addi-

tional legislation would be required to do this. This is unlikely. To the contrary, legislation limiting or stopping inductions under the Selective Service System may be passed before the act normally expires.

Secondly, a one-year military training program, similar to that outlined in the May-Gurney bill, may be adopted. This seems to have the support of President Truman as well as of large groups in both houses of Congress. It will meet with greater opposition in the Senate Military Affairs Committee and in the Senate generally than in the House. This is not a program of conscription for military service. Training alone is involved.

A compromise measure, following the suggestion of the late President Roosevelt, may be a year of national service, not military in nature. This program would emphasize such things as health and citizenship.

A final possibility is an enlarged ROTC program, extending to high school boys and including two or three summer sessions.

It is of course possible that no legislative action will be taken by this Congress. The strategy of the churches and many other groups before the Woodrum Committee was to oppose decision on the question of peacetime military training—*at this time*. Most of these groups did not express opposition to such training on principle. The Martin and Ludlow Resolutions ask for delay by our nation until the United Nations Organization can study the question and make a general recommendation on military training to all members. Such pressures may result in longer postponement of a decision by Congress than now seems probable.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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The statement on peacetime conscription published on the following page was adopted by the Council for Social Action in January, 1945. A new statement, also in opposition to compulsory peacetime military training but more relevant to the political situation this fall, is in preparation by the International Relations Committee of the Council.

# A Statement on Peacetime Conscription

## By the Council for Social Action

As Christian citizens we are concerned for international cooperation and order, for American democracy and employment, and for the rights of individual conscience.

**I**NTERNATIONAL organization, as outlined in the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals, should not necessitate a large standing army or peacetime conscription in the United States. American introduction of such policies now may hinder rather than help in the crucial matter of mutual confidence between the big powers as well as relations affecting the smaller nations.

**I**F international organization is not forthcoming, our immediate national security is not endangered, since present Selective Service will be in effect until six months after the war. Whether our long-run security would be furthered by conscription appears to be debatable, judging by differences of military opinion.

**D**EMOCRATIC values are involved both in the method by which conscription is determined and in the type of conscription which may be enacted: (a) Our servicemen and women are unable at the present time to have effective voice in domestic discussion; (b) Wartime emotions now prevail; (c) The effects which certain types of conscription policy might have upon democratic institutions and purposes are questionable. Would conscription lend itself to nationalism, to potentially fascist "efficiency" and "discipline"? Will it further extend the racial segregation which has characterized army and navy policies? Will it increase the tendency of some individuals to resort to violence in interracial and industrial disputes? How disruptive of educational and vocational training would conscription of a purely military nature be?

**W**HILE conscription would help to reduce unemployment by taking youth off of the labor market, this provides only a partial and negative answer to the questions of unemployment, and constitutes no major argument for conscription.

**O**UR first obligation is to work for international organization and collective agreements to reduce arms and the need for large scale "national defense," and then see what emerges, before our nation undertakes any innovations or long-run policies such as compulsory peacetime military training.

**I**N our judgment, the possibilities for international organization and the risks to our country both in its internal affairs and its foreign policy make it imperative that Congress adopt no policy for peacetime military conscription until after military hostilities have ceased. If a conscription bill is presented to Congress now, we must oppose it.

## Social Scene

*It is the irony of our false gods that the last word in science should enable us so tragically to blow the world apart. The atomic bomb gives us 20,000 times more power than we ever had before. It will be the nightmare of many a child, and cause uneasily to rest the heads of many states. At precisely the moment when we thought flight and communication would bind the world together, we have it in our hands to blast it all to bits.*

*But there are two positive possibilities in this enormous power. One is that harnessing it to production may give us such quantities of goods that no economic pattern can long deny the mass of people their just abundance. The other is that fear of the force that can blow cities apart may coerce the nations to live together. We may then have the paradox that mechanical explosives will assist in social integration.*

*Yet in the end the destiny of man is always at the mercy of those who control its sources of power. At the moment that means us. Let us pray God that history will one day say of us, as it said of the first generation of Christians, "These are they that hold the world together."*

*Alfred W. Swan*

## Good Reading

### ON THE ISSUE OF PEACETIME MILITARY TRAINING:

"Conscription for Peacetime Military Training—Pro and Con," *Information Service*, November 11, 1944

"Conscription for Peacetime?" Hanson W. Baldwin, *Harper's Magazine*, March 1945

"Now or Never," Under-Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, *Woman's Home Companion*, August, 1945

*Compulsory Peacetime Military Training*, by the Educational Policies Commission of the N.E.A., February, 1945—10 cents

*The Case Against Compulsory Peacetime Military Training*, Lt. Col. Roscoe S. Conkling, Post War World Council, 1945—10 cents

*Responsibility to Community, State and Nation—Universal Military Training*, The American Legion

### ON ALIGNMENT OF GROUPS:

*Conscription News*, a mimeographed bulletin edited at 1013 Eighteenth St., N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

*Universal Military Training*; Part 1, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy of the House of Representatives, June 4-19, 1945; Part 2, Statements Filed with the Select Committee

# Books for Social Action

PLAINVILLE, U.S.A., by James West (pseudonym), New York: Columbia University Press, 226 pp., \$2.75.

In June, 1939, a trained anthropologist, financed by the Social Science Research Council of Columbia University, set out to study a small mid-west farming community and its reactions to the influences of the outside world pouring in upon it through government and private agencies, radio, press and movies. For fifteen months James West listened to Plainville people discuss, criticize, condemn and approve each other and their way of life. Old clothes, an old Ford, the cooperation of a local politician in creating a role helped the social scientist to become a part of the community. The result is a depressing but factual picture of a community living without organized recreation, without inspired or informed educational and religious leadership. Young people are brought up on myths of social mobility and economic opportunity in a town with rigid class lines and a very limited economic future.

"Since," as West says, "there are millions of 'Plainvillers' in America, the problem of Plainville is the problem of America." It is also the problem of American Protestantism. Every rural minister should read this book with one question constantly before him: If I were called to serve in such a community what could I do?

The record of the Plainville churches (there are four) is a tragic one. The churches have without a struggle conformed to the local social hierarchy. The Christian and Methodist churches are composed almost exclusively of the "upper" class—the half of the people who have the best soil on their farms, old family backgrounds, wealth, and "morals". The Baptists to some extent, but principally the Holiness people, cut deeply into the "lower" class. A few people try to cross class lines via the church but never succeed. None of the churches, according to West, discuss "any of the problems of agriculture, ethics and human relationships that actually face the community." None of the "real resident 'reformers'" (for example, the county agent and the vocational agriculture teacher) . . . would dream of attempting to make of any church, or of any preacher, an instrument or ally to help further their work."

The book is strong on facts and weak on analysis and interpretation; it is abundant in colorful quotations of Plainvillers, but meager in description of the methodology used. One wishes the author had assumed some responsibility for indicating ways in which his facts could be used to help Plainville meet its problems. Nonetheless, West has given us the facts confronting rural institutions. We must worry over, pray over, act upon this book until we have erased the record of Plainville churches.

KENNETH UNDERWOOD

## Future Issues of Social Action

During the coming months, *Social Action* will present many significant facts, ideas, plans for a better post-war world. Below, listed chronologically from October, 1945 to March, 1946, are the proposed issues:

**RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS**—Answers to questions most often asked about Russia's political, economic, cultural and religious affairs, about her relationship to America's future, about areas of common ground and the hard points of difference.

**A PEACETIME HEALTH PROGRAM FOR AMERICA**—Report on the groups who need improved medical care; evaluation of the private and group experiments that have been attempted; description of an adequate national health program and of the pressure groups fighting for and against it.

**THE ROOTS OF OUR SOCIAL FAITH**—A search for historical principles that will guide us today in relating Christianity to social action.

**ANTI-SEMITISM—Causes, Effects, Cures**—The problem of the Jew as a symbol of moral crisis of our time, with emphasis upon the program of self-examination necessary both by Gentiles and Jews.

**BRITAIN AND LABOR GOVERNMENT**—An analysis by a British political economist of the movements for reform in England.

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